Participatory Exhibition Design:

Memory Jars at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History

Anna Marie Greco

A thesis in the Field of Museum Studies
For the Degree of Masters of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University
Extension School

May 2014

Abstract

In the fall of 2012, under the supervision of Director Nina Simon and with the support of an Irvine Grant the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History installed its first completely participatory gallery titled, *Memory Jars*. As part of a graduate internship, the author was the leader of this project.

The Memory Jar Activity invited visitors to fill a mason jar with objects provided that represented a personal memory. The visitor was then asked to write an accompanying label that described their memory. Over 600 jars were collected during the course of the three-month exhibition. Five hundred and sixty four of them were legible and transcribed for analysis. The memories that were collected represent visitors from all age groups and ranged in levels of intimacy and emotion. Some jars were made in response to the visitor's personal experience at the museum while others shared stories as private as losing a loved one in war (Greco, Memory Jar Labels). Due to the quantity and the range of stories, this activity created a safe space for visitors to come and share their memories with their community.

The gallery became a microcosm of the museum's visitor base and through visitor surveys and coding of the transcribed memories the author was able to determine why the gallery was such a notable success. Careful planning, timing and an understanding of educational theory and visitor needs were all crucial in creating a successful participatory exhibition. The data collected from this analysis provides insight into the future of these exhibitions, their endless possibilities as well as ethical questions, educational uses and best practices.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the support and guidance of several extraordinary individuals. First and foremost, I am forever grateful to Marybeth and Joseph Greco, my family. Without their unconditional support and advice none of this would have been possible. Secondly to Nina Simon for creating a museum where experimentation and risks are encouraged and for giving me the opportunity to see my ideas come to fruition. To the entire staff of the MAH and my fellow interns who provided the guidance, encouragement and power tools to make all of this possible. The guidance of Dr. Lauren Shapiro was crucial in creating the analysis for the Memory Jar Activity. The guidance and encouragement of Jan Crocker my advisor was also crucial to the completion of this thesis. I would also like to thank Emily Silet and Emily Garner, my supervisors at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum for telling me that going to California was a good idea. Lastly I would like to thank the community of Santa Cruz, whose enthusiasm for the arts and innovation provided the inspiration and content of the Memory Jar Activity.

Table of Contents

Figures

Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

When creating an exhibit the design team is continually asking themselves how to keep the visitor engaged and what knowledge do we want the visitor to leave with. The museum is often viewed as a place filled with information and objects that visitors can learn about. While they cannot take the objects, they take a unique experience home with them. In her book, *The Participatory Museum*, Nina Simon asked the museum community, what if visitors contributed to the content of a museum exhibition. By inviting the visitor to contribute to the content of the exhibition, the museum is changing the question from "what can the visitor learn from us" to, "what can we learn from our visitors (Simon iii)?" This role reversal poses new challenges and possibilities for curators, designers, educators and marketing.

Traditional art exhibitions display the works with information that the curators and museum staff believe to be important. The information can be delivered through text labels, audio guides, public programs, and other interpretive materials. The structure remains the same in all of instances. Information is being given to the visitor as if they are an empty vessel that needs to be filled without asking if the visitor wishes to learn the information (McLean 1). A participatory exhibition asks the visitor to contribute their own knowledge to the content of the exhibition. This creates an exhibit that takes into account the individual needs of a visitor and creates a personal connection between the visitor and the content. The information is traveling between the visitor and the museum and both parties will benefit from the exchange (The Participatory Museum 1).

Engaging the visitor has been a concern for museums since the Industrial Revolution. In 1917, John Cotton Dana, founder of the Newark Museum, said the future of museums was one in which an object was purchased due to its usefulness to the public and would be "placed where the majority of its community can quickly and easily visit it (Anderson 13)." The 2010 opening of the American Wing at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts included galleries showing how the art was being conserved, explained how the curators classify pieces, why those objects were added to the collection, and how specific pieces are chosen for exhibitions. This is an example of a museum that is exploring the different uses of its collection items and how they can benefit their visitors. The Oakland Museum takes this idea one step further and invites visitors to actively contribute to their *Gallery of California History.* Throughout the exhibition visitors can contribute content through sharing personal stories, voting on relevant issues, creating their own movie costumes, and much more. These galleries create transparency, giving the visitor a glimpse of how the museum operates and their role within contemporary society.

The same trends can be observed in artist's practices. Often participatory projects are most successful when they coincide with social movements (Bishop 3). Art Historian, Claire Bishop has researched the history of participatory works in western avante garde art. Bishop's book, *Artificial Hells*, begins by analyzing the twentieth century movements of Dadaism and Constructivism; from this analysis we get a view of the initial experimentation with social participation and mass spectacle (Bishop 3). There is often a rise in participatory projects after a major social or military movement. Performances engaging several thousand participants occurred in Russia in the wake of the 1917 revolution.

Social movements in the 1960s and 1970s gave way to the idea of the open work, described by Umberto Eco, novelist and theoretical writer. Eco explores occurrences in avant garde music and art that allow for interpretation beyond the artist's final product. For example:

> In Luciano Berio's *Sequence for Solo Flute*, the composer presents the performer a text which predetermines the sequence and intensity of the sounds to be played. But the performer is free to choose how long to hold the note inside the fixed framework imposed on him, which in turn is established by the fixed pattern of the metronome's beat. (Eco 1)

The composer created a framework for the musician to work within, but each performer is open to make certain choices within that framework. When analyzing the contemporary art of the 1960s Eco states that, ""(i)nformal art" is open in that it proposes a wider range of interpretive possibilities, a configuration stimuli whose substantial indeterminacy allows for a number of possible readings (84)." He believes that by creating an art piece that has a variety of interpretive conclusions that work has become "open." It requires the viewers to engage at a more complex and experiential level. The 1960s viewer has to participate in the interpretation of the piece in order for it to be effective.

With the rise of the Internet in the early twenty-first century, many websites have become participatory. Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Wikipedia and many more social media platforms and popular websites are made up of content that is user generated:

> The Social Web has ushered in a dizzying set of tools and design patterns that make participation more accessible than ever. Visitors expect access to a broad spectrum of information sources and cultural

perspectives. They expect the ability to respond and be taken seriously. (Simon,ii)

Technology has allowed for easier avenues for the distribution and collection of information. Users of the aforementioned websites not only digest the information presented in these venues, but also contribute to them. Participation in social media has become the standard, a fact that is clearly displayed in the following statistics found on the companies' websites. In September of 2013, Facebook had 1.19 billion users and an average daily use of 727 million individuals. Twitter has over 230 million users with over 500 million tweets sent per day. Participation in social media has become the standard.

There are still many levels of participation. There are content makers who create the materials being shared in these venues. There are also content absorbers who simply browse the web never making a comment or connection to the original poster. Observers still benefit from the participatory experience since they can appreciate the information being provided by their peers (The Participatory Museum 8). Successful participatory exhibitions will accommodate the wide variety of museum visitors, taking into account the whole person and their motivations.

Within a museum context there are varying levels of interaction and participation. Children's Museums incorporate play into almost all of their exhibitions as a way to engage young learners. Play has been proven to be a vital part of how children learn (Boston Children's Museum's Website). The website also states, "Through self-directed play children can follow their interests, explore the unknown, link outcomes with choices, conquer their fears and make friends." Science museums also include exhibitions with multiple outcomes, interactive activities. George Hein, founder of the

Lesley University Ph.D program in education, traces the development of science education during the 1960s and 1970s and its influence on the development of the Exploratorium in San Francisco (Progressive Museum Practice 167-169). An open ended approach to experimentation proved to be beneficial in the classroom as well as the museum.

The goal of a participatory project is to collect content from various sources in a way where the final project becomes greater than the sum of its parts. The initial contributions are generally simple and comprised of an image, object, thought or physical movement. The resulting project is allowed to flourish in unexpected ways. The initial designer relinquishes control over the final product allowing it to change as the contributions direct it. Interactive exhibitions allow visitor to touch but not contribute to the permanent exhibition. Simon has distinguished the two phrases as follows, pushing a button or making a craft in the gallery that one takes home with them afterwards is interactive where as participatory activities are left in the gallery to enrich the experience of future visitors (Participatory Exhibition Intern).

An example of an interactive project would be inviting the visitor to look at a world map within a city museum. This hypothetical map is a tool to show the viewer where visitors to the museum are from. The visitor is then asked to push a button in order to light up the map showing the various locations and their popularity. Every person who pushes the button will see the same graphic and learn the same information. The experience is still controlled by the exhibition designers. The Oakland Museum has a similar map at the beginning of its History of California Gallery (see Figure 1). The key difference is instead of telling visitors the statistic that they are

supposedly a part of, they ask the visitor to place a red sticker on the map to indicate the place where they are from. Over time the map will indicate which locations are most popular due to the accumulation of stickers. The visitor has made their literal mark, and knows their contribution will assist future visitors in understanding of the exhibit. The map also emphasizes one of the main educational goals of the gallery, which is that people have traveled to California from all over the world and this has helped to shape the state's history. The map is ever changing and could reflect statistical numbers collected by the museum or show bias depending on who is visiting the museum that day. Still the visitor begins their experience of the gallery by identifying themselves as a member of the community of California.

Figure 1: Coming to California, Oakland Museum of California, ©Camille Mann

Participatory and hands on exhibits have existed for many years in science and children's museums, however, there have been criticisms of the increase in participatory experiences in art museums. In an editorial posted online to the New York Times, Judith

Dobrzynski, an independent journalist, stated many of the New York cultural institutions are losing what makes them unique. She wrote, "(t)he challenge for the experts is to identify projects that neither drown out nor degrade the contemplation of more traditional forms of art, and serve instead to deepen and expand the museum experience." Both sides of this argument look to the growing world of technology and participatory business practices as the basis for this shift in museum experiences. Dobrzynski references the "experience economy" as the driving force behind this shift. The increase in the ability of individuals to post their every move and thought has created an insatiable appetite for shareable experience. Using Twitter, Facebook and Instagram has changed the way we experience the world around us. However, that does not mean the contemplative museum visitor does not still exist. Someone who simply wants to appreciate the Old Masters still has a place in the museum.

Claire Bishop poses yet another challenge:

> To grasp participatory art from images alone is almost impossible: casual photographs of people talking, eating, attending a workshop or screening a seminar tell us very little, almost nothing, about the concept and context of a given project. (5)

This argument applies to participatory exhibitions as well. When the goal of the activity is to create a meaningful, personalized experience for every visitor, there is no way to document each experience. Traditional exhibitions have a catalogue of images and essays carefully written and compiled by experts. Participatory exhibitions have a finite lifespan that does not begin until the exhibition opens and the final results cannot be predicted. The exhibition will never be recreated once it closes. They can be regarded as site-specific installations, which may appear daunting, but should rather be seen as

liberating. By closely analyzing one participatory exhibition we may gain insight into the

challenges and possibilities participatory exhibitions provide for museums.

The 2012 fall exhibition at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (MAH)

was titled, *Santa Cruz Collects*. One could argue that this entire exhibit was participatory

since the majority of the content was either loaned or created by citizens of Santa

Cruz. The introductory gallery was completely participatory with its goal of having the

visitors create their own collection that would grow throughout the exhibition's lifespan

(Simon Exhibition Meeting Notes). The design team pitched several ideas and through

careful prototyping the Memory Jar Activity was developed. The final gallery consisted

of Mason Jars that participants filled with objects provided by the museum that

represented their own memory. The participants also wrote a label that was displayed

with their jar. The final installation included floor to ceiling shelves that held the

participants contributions in the Lezin Gallery (See Figure 1). The Memory Jar Activity

was considered a success due to the number of participants that contributed to the

exhibition. By looking closer at the content that was created, a deeper understanding of

the benefit of participatory exhibitions can be seen.

Figure 2. Lezin Gallery, Memory Jar Shelves, Sana Cruz Museum of Art and History, ©Anna Greco

Visitor experiences and feedback showed that the Memory Jar Activity created new traditions, influenced therapeutic practices and contributed to the museum wide exhibition focused on collections and collectors (Summative Evaluation Survey). Once ownership of the space had been handed over to the visitor it allowed the activity to grow and flourish in unexpected ways. However, all of this occurred within the scaffolding that the design team created for the exhibition. The Memory Jar Gallery was an example of not only how museums can improve participatory experiences, but also the endless possibilities such galleries can provide for museum patrons of all levels and interests.

Chapter 2

History of Participation

In the 2005, June edition of the Financial Times, Scott McNealy, co-founder of

Sun Micro Systems welcomed his readers to the Participation Age. He goes on to

explain, "(i)t is based on the simple but powerful truths that innovation can happen

anywhere and that creating connections and networks has a multiplier effect on

creativity." McNealy is making a reference to the Internet boom as well as the creation

of social media. Due to these technological advances businesses and marketing are able

to collaborate globally and have a direct connection to their consumers. However, even

though the Participation Age may have been declared in 2005, participatory theory and

practices in art and education have existed for almost one hundred years. Educational

theorist John Dewey was discussing the importance of student input in his publication,

The School and Society, published in 1900. Activists in Italy during the 1910's can also

be credited with some of the first participatory artist projects and gatherings. This

chapter will look at the history of Participatory Theory from the beginning of the

twentieth century to Internet boom in 2000. The proliferation online media has allowed

participatory projects to be a part of the everyday experience of the museum visitor with

no indication the trend is going to slow down. Keep in mind the winners of American

Idol are not chosen by expert judges, rather the millions of viewers that call in to vote.

A Brief History of Participation in Art

The beginning of the twentieth century marked a distinct change in cultural expression. The industrial revolution brought along new ideas in the arts, culture, and politics. The First World War devastated the European landscape with trenches. Airplanes and automobiles were becoming commonplace objects. Artists were looking internally for inspiration and abstraction was displayed in America for the first time in the 1913 Armory Show. Sarah Fisko of the Fisko Files on National Public Radio describes this era as one of shock and awe (The Greenwich Historical Society Annual Meeting). It was filled with experimentation and the exploration of new ideas. The world was becoming smaller with these new technologies and allowed for ideas to be distributed faster and to a greater number of consumers. This is the same trend that has occurred since 2000 with the mass proliferation of the Internet and social media. What is common in these two eras is an increase in participatory projects. In the beginning of the twentieth century artists looked to the creation of community for artistic expression, to explain the evolving technologies that were becoming integrated into their everyday lives and the social changes that evolved from conflict. The same trend can be seen in the artistic practice and social movements that have taken place since 2000.

In January of 1910 futurist artists in Italy hoped to visually express the new, fast paced world of the twentieth century. Images of machines like the automobile were often used in their work or trying to paint a body in motion. They tried to convey this changing world in many different media including performances called Seratas. This style of Futurist Theater in Italy allowed audience members to participate in various ways including discussion on stage or by throwing food at artwork. There was no formal

structure to these early works and many combined music, poetry, politics and art in a venue artists found appealing because of the lack of an intermediary such as a book or exhibition (Bishop 42). According to Bishop, "Futuristic performances were not designed to negate the presence of the audience, but to exaggerate it, to make it visible to itself, to stir it up, halt complacency, and cultivate confidence rather than docile respect (46)." It sought to activate the audience, set it in motion.

In 1920 mass spectacles took place in Russia in celebration of the 1917 revolution. The *Mystery of Freed Labor* on May 5th and *The Blocade of Russia* on June 20th both consisted of thousands of participants. The performers were directed as the performance occurred and attracted over 35,000 spectators (Bishop 58). These performances were met with much criticism and the use of so many amateurs led to sloppy acting. The sheer number of people led to logistical problems such as slow exits and entrances onto the stages. Rehearsals only included several hundred individuals and could not prepare the trained professionals for dealing with thousands on performance day (58-59).

While the Russian participatory performance was ideological and affirmative in nature, the Dadaists in Paris used similar methods to create anarchistic spectacles. The first gathering of what is called the "Dada Season" took place on April 14, 1921. It began in the churchyard of Saint Julien-le-Pauvre. The site was chosen because it was an abandoned and uninteresting place, "positively doleful" (Bishop 67). The artists led an excursion with the purpose of deconstructing the traditional guided tour. A manifesto was read and the group proceeded to partake in a walking tour. Instead of learning about historical sites and monuments, a definition from the Larousse dictionary was read at

random at each stop of the tour. This first event was met with mixed reviews, some of the artists involved considered it a success while others were disappointed and blamed rain for the low attendance. Subsequent performances were considered more successful since the audience participated by throwing eggs and meat at the performers. At the third performance in late May the audience interrupted the performance with instruments they had brought themselves. Andre Breton, a member of the Dada movement, believed is was crucial for Dada to enter the public realm. By leaving the theater and entering the streets of Paris the work could make a deeper connection between art and life (71).

These early explorations in participatory art led the way to similar experiments in the past century. Often these projects have a correlation to the political and social struggles occurring at that time. These previously mentioned projects occurred in the wake of WWI, similar trends could be observed post WWII, during the social movements of the sixties and again in the post economic boom of the 1980s. The 2000s saw a rise in pedagogic projects undertaken by curators and contemporary artists (Bishop 241). This was paralleled by the growth of museum education departments whose responsibilities have expanded from tours and lectures to include collaboration with like-minded institutions, public programming that reaches beyond the scope of the collection and conferences to name a few.

This rise in participation through exhibitions and educational programming is a direct result of the social, economic and political trends currently taking place. Participatory art has been present at many of the Biennial Exhibitions at contemporary art museums over the past five years. With the rise of the Internet opinions on any topic can be heard and responded to by a larger audience than ever

before. Political movements such as Occupy Wall Street were organized via the Internet, and when politicians in the Middle East tried to suppress press coverage of riots in December of 2010 protesters were able to tell their stories through Twitter. In the past few years the power of participation for change has been well established.

While museums may not be advocating for drastic regime change, participatory projects create temporary communities in much the same way. For the Memory Jar Activity each visitor submitted a single memory that became a part of a collective and shed light on a community within Santa Cruz. It allowed visitors to the museum to see what members of their community held onto, collected in their consciousness and carried with them at all times.

Relevant Educational Theory

This section will look at general educational theory and visitor studies to determine the applicability of participatory exhibitions and their ability to fulfill the varying expectations that museums have for their public exhibitions. According to their website, in order to receive accreditation from the American Alliance of Museum's one's institution must, "be essentially educational in nature." However, most museums do not adhere to the standard educational practices one would find in traditional classrooms. Museums are considered, as institutions of informal learning where there are no standardized tests, no grades and if a visitor leaves without memorizing the facts of a specific exhibition there are no consequences. In fact most museum visitors will leave the institution without proving they have acquired any new knowledge from their experience. An exhibition can include labels, interpretive panels, gallery guides, various

hands on activities and programming, but unless it also receives a response from the visitor there is no way to gage the educational impact the exhibition has had. With the exception of the occasional school tour, visitors choose to come of their own volition. It is assumed they arrive pre-disposed to acquire new knowledge. However, there are various theories for how to best deliver new information. Even though museums themselves do not access its visitors in the same way schools do their students, the basic theories of learning will apply.

There has been a great deal of research on how individuals learn. In the early 20th century John Dewey critiqued the traditional teaching paradigm because it did not take into account the "diversity of capacities and needs" of individual human beings. He also states the need to learn must come from the pupil and only then can knowledge be absorbed (Dewey 5). George Hein, Professor Emeritus at Lesley University and founder of their Doctorate program in Educational Studies, bases many of his observations about museum education on the theories of John Dewey. Through his observations of museum visitors he has concluded that no individual arrives at the museum as a blank slate and they will generally be attracted to exhibitions where they already have some knowledge of the subject (An Introduction to Constructivist Learning Theory 6). The combination of these two ideas suggests that by tapping into the previous knowledge a visitor brings with them to the museum an exhibition could create a more meaningful and attractive experience. Participatory exhibitions allow an avenue for this knowledge to be shared and incorporated into the exhibition. It can also be a method for the museum itself to see what information the visitors are arriving with and subsequently leaving with, fulfilling the museum's requirement to be educational.

If we consider the traditional paradigm of education to be didactic, a system in which lessons are highly structure based on a singular subject and presented to the learner in an incremental format, than we will consider all other methods as experimental. Within a gallery the information could be delivered to the visitor through a docent or audio tour. However, that same information could also be available through self-directed learning.

Constructivist learning is a theory that postulates, if a learner is given the tools and freedom to follow their own course of discovery their outcome will be the same as a traditionally structured lesson. The knowledge gained from the experience will be more meaningful and will result in a higher retention rate because the learners arrived at the conclusion through their own devices. In a gallery where supervision and guidance cannot always facilitate understanding, these methods of learning can aid the design process. Participatory exhibitions are only successful if the information retrieved is relevant to the community that comes to the museum and if the content creates an experience that supports the educational goals of the exhibition. There is a great deal left to chance. However, a carefully designed activity will still allow for creative license while it parameters support to a greater educational goal. By looking closer at unconventional learning theories one can design exhibitions that are conducive to informal learning.

John Dewey was an educational reformer, psychologist and philosopher. His advocacy in educational reform was based on the notion that a true democracy existed only if there was a full expansion of voter's rights and also a well-informed public. His publications rage in topics from logic to art experience, democracy and schools. At the

basis of his theory is the idea that the process of learning is more important than the

result. The drives and individual needs of the learner will determine the success of the

experience.

Dewey also draws from nature:

> The difference in result may in part be due to native stock, but it is also
> due in part to what the environment has provided. And even the finest
> native stock would come to an untimely end or result in a miserable
> product if its energies could not interact with favorable conditions of light,
> moisture, air ect. (John Dewey on Education 5)

Just like in nature a student can only learn from the materials provided. The larger the

metaphorical classroom the more they can experience and learn. Exhibits are designed to

convey the information and conclusions of experts. Still, even if the facts are presented

they are subjective in relationship to the visitor's unique life experience. By opening up

the forum to the public, the visitors are exposed to many more opinions and experiences

that will inevitably allow them to make their own conclusions from the experience of

many rather than a few. The visitor becomes a better-informed member of the public.

In his collected lectures, *The School and Society*, originally published in 1900,

Dewey proposes a university design in which the museum acts as a central room with

other subjects taught in each of its four corners. The premise is that the central room acts

as a meeting place to discuss ideas for all of these subjects. Dewey calls it a "recitation

room".

> That is the place where the children bring the experience, the problems,
> the questions, the particular facts which they have found, and discuss them
> so that new light may be thrown upon them, particularly new light from
> the experience of others, the accumulated wisdom of the world-
> symbolized in the library. (Experience and Nature 85)

In this design it allows for cross-departmental collaboration, the exchange of ideas as well as multiple opportunities to approach a challenge. The key to this is to pull on the collective knowledge of the class and it enforces the idea that the solution to your problem does not have to come from your own department. However, the success of the model is dependent on what the students bring to the museum from their own experience. The same methodology is the basis of participatory design.

George Hein takes interest in Dewey's design as well in his book *Progressive Museum Practice.* Hein's interpretation comments on the need for Museums to be considered a part of an "organic whole". Stating that the museum experience is important, however it cannot be a "complete life experience by itself". He goes on to state the museum experience is no substitute for real life experience and that replacing the former for the latter could create negative results (Progressive Museum Practice 45). In truly scientific methodology it is not enough to philosophize; there must also be practical application.

George Hein's work has looked at learning theory and practice within a museum. He has been faced with a plethora of convincing testimony in regards to learning within museums. However; it has often been hard to quantify the level of learning that occurs. In "Museums: Places of Learning" published in 1998, Hein states a large problem with quantifying learning within the museum is because there have been no established learning theories associated with this type of education (10). Later in this essay he combines theories of knowledge and theories of learning to create a chart that cross sects learning theory with the theory of knowledge. Didactic learning insinuates that all of the information exists outside of the learning and must be brought in.

Constructivist Learning on the side of the chart claims that the information is within the student waiting to come out via experience (25). Schools have traditionally represented didactic, expository learning. Teachers presented information bit by bit, building knowledge on a subject. There was a large emphasis on repetition and recitation (33). Constructivism has an emphasis on action and discovery. The theory is based on the idea that if learners are introduced to enough data they will be able to achieve the desired lesson on their own (35). This in turn results in high learning because the visitor reached the conclusion on his or her own. Constructivism requires the learner to engage not just mentally but physically. They must experiment and manipulate according to Hein (36). Participatory activities are a product of this learning theory. If the activity allows the visitor to engage with certain materials and information, their product will be a valid object for the exhibition. By combining their pre-existing knowledge with that of the exhibition they can make valid contributions that ultimately enhance the learning experience. Hein states that, "(d)evelopmental psychologists have stressed that for significant learning to take place; new concepts must compete with mental structures already present in the mind (Museums Places of Learning 37)."

An extreme constructivist would believe experience is the only teacher. Hein believes constructivism actually places more demands on the teacher to provide a meaningful experience for the learner (Museums Places of Learning 38). For a constructivist museum exhibition to be successful it will not only provide the visitor opportunities to construct their own knowledge, it will also validate the learner's conclusion, whether or not they support the intended outcome of the design team. He suggests the following elements be present in a constructivist exhibition:

- Will have many entry points, no specific path and no beginning and end;
- Will provide a wide range of active learning modes;
- Will present a range of points of view;
- Will enable visitors to connect with objects (and ideas) through a range of activities and experiences that utilize their life experiences;
- Will provide experiences and materials that allow students in school programs to experiment, conjecture, and draw conclusions. (Teaching in Museums 35)

Even though all of these points provide open-ended experiences driven by the visitor, there is also ample room for interpretation by the museum to direct and guide learning.

Hein states people learn in museums, whether it is a narrowly defined, a specific pedagogic message or a more broadly experiential response. Their reaction to specific concepts, aesthetics or "flow" is the result of learning (153). It is possible to maximize the learning through attending to the visitor's basic needs including physical comfort and mental comfort. Mental comfort can be improved by making the museums intentions as transparent as possible and the interactions between the visitor and the content of the museum positive. Once these needs are met the visitor can investigate the elements of an exhibition that appeals to them without inhibitions. By giving the visitor an outlet to express their conclusions and validate them, the museum encourages learning and independent investigation.

Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, founders of situationalist learning theory, purpose a learning method they call legitimate peripheral participation. This method supposes learners are constantly absorbing knowledge from their surroundings. They cite several case studies based on different apprenticeships and their effectiveness. They conclude the most successful are those that are not structured on a traditional master apprentice relationship but rather those based within a community of adults that have created a lifestyle in which apprentices can gradually acclimate to. Their theory is not one in

which lesson plans and curriculums can be based off of, but rather a general understanding of how we learn in a grander context. The manipulation of an environment can have drastic changes on a students learning potential. It also concludes that greater success was achieved when an apprentice's occupation tied into their lifestyle and upbringing. For example, midwives who had been raised by midwives completed highly successful apprenticeships. On the other hand tailors who entered the profession in their teens and only studied during business hours were far less successful at learning the skills for their chosen profession.

> Participation is always based on situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world. This implies that understanding and experience are in constant interaction – indeed, are mutually constitutive. The notion of participation thus dissolves dichotomies between cerebral and embodied activity, between contemplation and involvement, between abstraction and experience: persons, actions and the world are implicated in all thought, speech, knowing and learning. (Lave 52)

There have been many other theorists who have examined experimental learning. Jerome Bruner is a psychologist who has made significant contributions to human cognitive psychology and cognitive learning theory in educational psychology and general philosophy of education. His theories postulated that learners evaluate events based on the social and physical environments that framed the experience. Since most museum visitors attend in groups, understanding social motivations becomes imperative to the education process. "Each generation gives new form to the aspirations that shape education and its time (Bruner, 1)."

It is also important to consider the events leading up to the museum visit and those following. As George Hein suggests no museum visitor arrives as an empty vessel and his or her learning experience is directed by previous knowledge. John Falk and

Lynn Dierking consider the visit itself to not be an insular event. The visit can be greatly affected by events that have happened earlier in the day, or week. Subsequently the visitor's impression of museums can be effected by the events that follow. The visit in itself is part of a greater experiential context. The social and environmental influences can affect the responses visitors leave during a participatory exhibition.

Visitor Studies

Recent visitor analysis has informed museum professionals about the needs of their audience. These needs reach beyond the physical such as proper seating and access to bathrooms and look at the experience various individuals seek during their time in the galleries. After 20 years of research Falk and Dieking have distinguished the following seven categories of museum visitors:

> Explorers are curiosity-driven visitors with a generic interest in the contents of the museum. They expect to find something that will grab their attention and fuel their curiosity and learning.

> Facilitators are socially motivated visitors. Their visit is primarily focused on enabling the learning and experience of others in their accompanying social group.

> Professionals/ Hobbyists are visitors who feel a close tie between the museum contents and their professional or hobbyist passions. Their visits are typically motivated by a desire to satisfy a specific content-related objective.

> Experience Seekers are visitors motivated to visit because they perceive the museum as a must-see destination. Their satisfaction primarily derives from the having been there and done that, an important goal for them.

> Rechargers are visitors who primarily seek a contemplative, spiritual and/or restorative experience. They see the museum as a refuge from work-a-day world or as a confirmation of their religious/spiritual beliefs.

> Respectful Pilgrims are visitors who visit museums out of a sense of duty
> or obligation to honor the memory of those represented by
> institution/memorial.
>
> Affinity Seekers are visitors motivated to visit a particular museum or
> exhibition because it speaks to their sense of heritage and/or Big "I"
> identity or personhood. (The Museum Visitor Experience Revisited 62)

Falk introduces his philosophy of big "I" and little "i" identity. Big "I" refers to aspects of one's self that remain constant through changing social situations. These include race, gender and age. Little "i" identity however, is constantly changing. For example one day a man could come to the museum with his family. His identity that day would be father and his expectations of the visit would be different then if he came on another day with a friend. However, one cannot assume ones category simply from these identifying markers. A father could come to the museum as a facilitator, basing his experience after that of his children or he could be an Experience Seeker no matter whom he has come to the museum with. In conclusion the museum itself has to account for all of these categories in order to fulfill its visitor's needs. If it finds one group dominates its visitor base it can plan accordingly (The Museum Experience Revisited 63).

Falk focuses on why visitors come to the museum. Understanding these motivations helps the museum prepare for their arrival, but what do they do once they get to the institution? As part of the research for the centennial celebration the Dallas Art Museum's education staff looked to identify the needs of their visitors within the galleries. What types of activities or interpretive materials attracted what types of visitors. They identified four main groups: Enthusiasts, Observers, Participants and Independents (Hirzy 43). Enthusiasts and Participants have very similar needs from the

museum and are the most likely to participate in hands on activities and provide feedback of their experiences. They make up 54 percent of the Dallas Museum's visitors. Participants are drawn to the social aspects of Museum experience. They are also drawn to art making experiences that allow them to acquire new skills (62). Enthusiasts are also engaged through social learning, but are also looking for art that connects to their real life experiences (82). Observers and Independents were identified as needing less involvement from the museum staff, and should be left to interpret and appreciate exhibits on their own. Observers were identified as having the least amount of experience with the museum and are the least comfortable in a museum setting (44). The data received from this study broke down the visitor base by participation. The museum learned Participants who came to the museum for social reasons were more likely to engage with public tours, gallery talks, performance based programs and had a general interest in the narrative for a piece of art. They want to know the story of the artist as well as their methodology in making each piece. The museum determined participants benefit from creativity challenges, late night programming, social media and workshop style programs where they can learn a new skill. On the other hand Independents prefer viewing artwork on their own without a guide. They have a strong background in art and believe the museum should have less interpretation and allow visitors to discover the works on their own. They prefer the inclusion of primary sources in their experience as well as expert lectures, access to catalogs online and membership events tailored to niche interests (118-119). Despite the varying needs and interests of these two groups. A well-designed exhibition will have activities for both of them. Participatory exhibitions can also cater to the needs of a wide variety of visitors.

In her book, *The Participatory Museum*, Nina Simon asked the museum community, what if visitors contributed to the content of a museum exhibition (Simon iii). The follow up to this question is how does the contribution of visitors enhance their experience of the exhibition? How does it enhance the exhibition goals?

> Some designers assume that by simply touching something, people will consequently have an interactive experience. This misconception results in providing participation for its own sake, while missing the point that the interaction-taking place must be directly linked to the underlying concepts (Mclean 97).

Each exhibition has unique goals and audiences. Therefore, not every participatory activity will be relevant for every exhibition. Careful research, prototyping and front-end evaluation can determine if a participatory activity will support the goals of the institution and those of the specific exhibition. Simply pushing a button does not indicate success. The visitor must have a take away experience that leaves an impact from their visit. This does not need to be a physical take away. With participatory exhibitions the goal is for the visitor to contribute an object to the exhibition. However, the hope is that by contributing to the exhibition the visitor will leave with a greater connection or sense of community with the museum. They may have learned something about themselves or the exhibition, but the goal is creating a lasting memory. After many years of developing what were once considered experimental learning theories, Hein suggests the mere act of experimenting is proof of learning and no experience is void of education. If this is the case then participatory exhibitions can be used to enforce educational goals and support every museum's mission.

Chapter 3

Designing a Participatory Exhibition

In 2012 the Museum of Art and History in Santa Cruz, California received a grant

from the Irvine Foundation to create a completely participatory gallery (Simon Exhibition

Meeting Notes). This space would be a part of the larger museum wide exhibition, *Santa*

Cruz Collects. The show celebrated the private collections of Santa Cruz residents. The

first floor gallery would house the participatory gallery, which would double as an

introduction to the exhibition. The main gallery, located on the second floor, would

house the private collections as well as four smaller participatory activities. The MAH

and the University of California Santa Cruz did contribute to the collections on view to

facilitate a conversation between private and public collections. The labels were

collaboration between the curators and the collector's autobiographical statements. The

collections ranged from fine art to dryer lint, highlighting, that there are many different

objects worthy of collecting and various reasons for doing so.

MAH Background

The exhibition opened on August 11, 2012. At this time the museum consisted of

eight full-time employees. Part-time staff was hired to help with visitor services and

exhibition installation. Additional interns and volunteers aided with programs, visitor

services, exhibitions, and collections management. The author was brought onto the

design team six months prior to the exhibition opening as an intern, to design and execute

26

the grant-funded participatory gallery. Several interns were already established in the

department and had worked on previous exhibitions.

In the year prior to the exhibition, the museum itself underwent several

institutional changes. Nina Simon was appointed as the new director and a new

institutional vision was developed with the following goals for exhibitions that can be

found on the museum's website:

- Multi-modal, inviting visitors to engage with a range of senses and content formats
- Interdisciplinary, encouraging visitors to experience art and history as interrelated topics that provide greater cultural context to one another
- Participatory, incorporating visitors' own creative expression, historical knowledge, and personal stories
- Immersive, using narrative design techniques intended to stimulate new ways of experiencing and connecting to content
- Social, helping visitors deepen relationships with each other and with museum staff/volunteers

The intent of these goals was to create a museum that reached out to the diverse needs of

its community.   Participatory exhibition open up a line of communication between the

visitor and the museum. By engaging the visitor in this way the museum can address

certain issues relevant in the community and become an active agent for change.

Museums in particular have the ability to bridge communities to discuss controversial

issues across race, gender, age, class and religion (Crooke 68). Similar to the social

movements that spurred participatory artist projects earlier in the twentieth century.

Santa Cruz Background

In 2012, Santa Cruz had a population of 61,955 people and local industries

included the University of California at Santa Cruz, Platronics, Inc (an electronics

company) and the Beach Boardwalk (City of Santa Cruz Website). Santa Cruz has strong

support for the arts with a thriving artist community. A citywide Arts Master Plan was

approved in 2007. Below is a brief description of this plan that can be found on the town

website:

> The Arts Master Plan puts forth the vision of a Santa Cruz whose
> economic health and vibrancy is built on its finest resources; its stunning
> natural environment, educated populace innovative thinkers, esteemed
> academic institutions, small-town character and highly-respected arts
> community.

In keeping with this vision, the Arts Master Plan seeks to create a community that:

- Embraces the local arts community as a unique and vital resource which
  shapes and
- Reflects the City's distinctive cultural identity;
- Takes a leadership role in fostering the arts as a community resource; and
- Leverages the arts as a key component in its overall economic
  development strategies.

The community and the government both acknowledge the importance of the arts and

that their continued involvement is necessary for its continued success culturally and

economically. The support of the town is crucial when branching out with more

experimental exhibits and programming. Santa Cruz is a supportive community when it

comes to experimentation and new ideas, a trait, which shows itself in their unofficial

town motto, "Keep Santa Cruz Weird (Hoppin)."

Designing for Your Visitors

Kathleen McLean, a museum professional who has written extensively about the needs of the visitor within a museum, refers to the relationship between a museum and its audience as a conversation. According to McLean, "Unless the creators of exhibitions talk and listen to visitors and really get to know them, exhibitions will not communicate adequately; they will be more like a "message in a bottle (Planning for People in Musuems 17)." The metaphor she makes suggests that the traditional method of exhibition design displays objects without anticipating its audience's needs or background. McLean believes there is much more designers can do to ensure that visitors understand an exhibition and relate to it. Participatory exhibitions are a way to continue the conversation through the entirety of an exhibition (Planning for People in Museums ix). Still, just because an exhibit is participatory does not mean visitors will do the activity and understand what is intended. Much of the success of the Memory Jar Activity was due to careful planning and prototyping. Before the exhibition was opened, the activity was tested and refined to ensure visitors would understand the activity and it supported the institutional goals for the exhibition.

The Design Team

The design team consisted of nine individuals: three staff members, four interns and two independent consultants. The three staff members were Marla Novo, Curator of Historical Exhibitions and Archives, Susan Leesk, Curator of Art Exhibitions, and Nina Simon, Executive Director. The four interns (of which the author is one) came from

various educational backgrounds consisting mainly of art history and studio art. Their

responsibilities were focused on developing the participatory elements of the

exhibition. One outside consultant who was present at almost all of the design meetings

was Dr. Lauren Shapiro. A doctoral candidate at the time, Dr. Shapiro's work focused on

the psychological development of relationships. She had been a consultant on previous

projects and had conducted research on hoarding and the psychological impulse to

collect. The other consultant was museum design professional Darcie Fohrman who has

received several awards for her exhibition designs and is an advocate for visitor

experiences.

On May 29th, 2012, Darcie Fohrman came to the weekly meeting to consult on

the exhibition. Forman has an impressive design resume and has received multiple

awards and national recognition for her work on Daniels Story at the National Holocaust

Museum. Her opinion was enthusiastically awaited due to her experience as well as her

design philosophy (available on her website), which was aligned with the goals the MAH

was trying to implement:

> It is the responsibility of the creators of exhibitions to provide a variety of
> opportunities for visitors to feel as though they are participants in the
> discovery process and to be able to construct their experience. We should
> create opportunities for visitors to explore, discover and contribute their
> knowledge and opinions. We must design a variety of experiences for

different learning styles so exhibits will touch visitors emotionally as well as intellectually.

She was able to point out areas of the design narrative that were weak and focused on its strengths. Her visit made the design team pause and really analyze the general experience that the visitors would have in the gallery.

Design Challenges

The layout of the MAH is problematic for exhibition design. There are three distinct gallery space located on three floors of the museum. For a large show such as *Santa Cruz Collects,* all three floors needed to be incorporated into the narrative. The Lezin Gallery on the first floor where the Memory Jar Activity was located needed to be connected thematically to an artist installation on the third floor.

The galleries could either be accessed through a large industrial spiral staircase or an elevator. These large spaces created a lull in the exhibition as visitors traveled from one floor to another. The challenge was to create a cohesive exhibition whose narrative would not be lost as visitors transitioned from one floor to another. The solution was to display smaller collections within these transition spaces. For example, a collection of sea glass was placed in a window within the stairway leading up to the third floor. It activated the space and highlighted a smaller collection. A sound installation was also installed in the stairwell that responded to movement. As visitors traveled up and down the stairs between the first and second floor they triggered a randomized recording of bird sounds. They also had the option to visit the front desk and contribute their own birdcall to the sound piece. On another section of the staircase an interactive activity was

installed that challenged visitors to match the scientific names of collectors with the object. By placing various elements of the exhibition in these transitional spaces the MAH connected the exhibition to the various floors, and activated an otherwise visually non-stimulating environment.

The Exhibition *Santa Cruz Collects*

The content of the exhibition was selected to reflect the community of Santa Cruz. These collections were found from various methods and the only requirement was residents of Santa Cruz created them. A few of the collectors had been previously identified due to national status or from established relationships with the museum. An open call was also posted on the website. For this reason the collections on display were found through a participatory method. A few of the collectors even created the display for their collections. The museum staff still had a heavy hand in the selection process, but it was not completely their directive. By creating an open call to the community, the curators were exposed to a much larger demographic and were able to create ties to collectors and collections they were unaware of prior to the project. This open call also created a broader audience for the show.

As a way to standardize the selection process, as well as establish initial background for unknown collections, the following questions were asked of collectors who responded to the open call:

1. What is the star of your collection?
2. What is unique or surprising about your collection?
3. How does your collection relate to Santa Cruz?

4. Do you have an object with incredible sentimental value that otherwise doesn't fit- i.e. low external value, low aesthetic value?

(Simon Exhibition Meeting Notes)

These questions allowed the design team to access where the collection could fit in the exhibition narrative. By creating these standardized questions, the team could guarantee they were making their decisions based on uniform information about each collection. There was also the concern of variety within the stories. The team wanted each collection to have a unique quality to it that would allow it to stand on its own not just due to the objects, but also the collector's motivations (Simon Exhibition Meeting Notes).

Prototyping the Memory Jar Activity

Throughout the design process there were two prototyping opportunities during public museum events. A monthly event called First Friday has consistently brought in over a thousand visitors to the MAH. This audience is attracted by the free admission and is more likely to have participants who do not normally visit the museum (Greco Exhibition Meeting Notes). This event was a perfect opportunity to test the Memory Jar Activity with a wide variety of visitors, with varying degrees of investment in the museum.

The purpose of the first prototyping session was to test the idea of the Memory Jar Activity and see if it would encourage visitors to participate. When initially brainstorming intangible collections, dreams and memories came up as possible topics for the jar activity. There was equal enthusiasm for both topics amongst the staff. The first prototyping event also gave the team a chance to test out wording for the instructions and

possible materials for the gallery. The facilitator decided to take an active role in the first prototyping session. She provided the instructions for the activity, interacted with the visitors, and assisted with the actual creation of the jars (Simon Exhibition Meeting Notes).

The prototyping session proved to be a success due to its popularity and the feedback that was received by the staff observing the activity. Children and adults responded to the Memory Jar Activity with enthusiasm and many visitors who did not contribute to the display still engaged by looking at the jars and discussing the visitor created labels. The benefit of testing the activity before the exhibition opened is that it exposed weaknesses in the design and concept. Dreams proved to be too abstract. Many adults were confused by whether we meant dreams one had while sleeping, or dreams one had for one's future. Many children did not remember their dreams and therefore chose memories because their parents had an easier time explaining what those were. Due to this confusion, the design team settled on memories as a topic for the activity (Greco Exhibition Meeting Notes).

The second prototyping event was to test out the findings of the first. While the facilitator had been very active in the first prototyping event by preparing materials and conversing with the participants, this session was to be more hands off. The goal was to see if visitors would be able to figure out the activity without assistance. This simulated the experience in the gallery, as most days there would be no staff to explain instructions. The materials displayed on the tables were pre-cut, simplified instructions were written for visitors to follow and explained the museum was testing out an idea for an upcoming exhibition. One of the museum volunteers who were not a part of the design team

facilitated the activity and the author checked in periodically throughout the night for

updates (Greco Exhibition Meeting Notes).

<center>Memory Jar Gallery Final Design</center>

The Memory Jar Activity was located in the Lezin gallery. This is the first floor

gallery located directly behind the admission desk (see Figure 1 and 2). The activity was

designed to take up the entire gallery and act as an introduction to the entire

exhibition. Upon entering the space, the visitor was faced with an installation of floor to

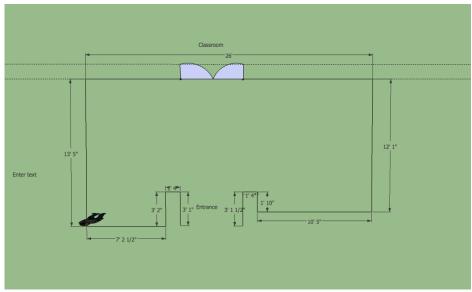ceiling shelves filled with mason jars.

Figure 3:Floor plan of Lezin Gallery: the site for the Memory Jar Activity, ©Anna Greco
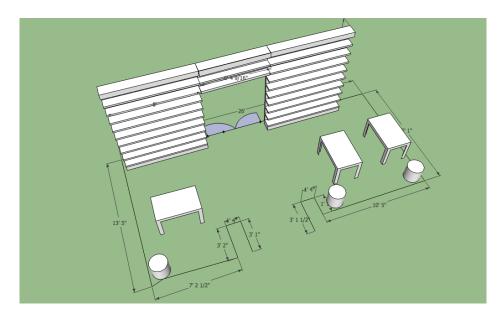
Figure 4: Final Plan for Lezin Gallery (Memory Jar Activity), ©Anna Greco

The jars all had labels that were modeled after traditional shipping tags. On each label was written "_____'s Memory Jar: I remember…" On the left wall was a mural designed by a local artist illustrating the activity but provided no written instructions. On the right wall was vinyl text stating "I remember…" with an installation of six photographs from the museum's collection (See Figure 4). These were chosen by the designers to evoke personal memories from different locations around Santa Cruz. Some of the photographs were documentation of specific events like a flood while others showed coastal landscapes. In each corner was a handmade tower of beach buckets were filled with a variety of materials. These materials were chosen due to their ability to evoke creativity and memory. They included craft materials, natural objects and man-made toys. Three craft tables with stools were provided to allow plenty of space to complete the activity. A label was placed outside of the gallery as an introduction to the exhibition, but there were no instructions on how to perform the activity. Visitors

were expected to first look at the installation, interact with the preexisting jars and then make one to contribute to the collection. Artist Justin Lavato was hired to create a visual representation of the activity. This mural was intended to be instructional and visually stimulating (See Figure 5). All of the materials needed to create the Memory Jars were provided by the museum although; a few individuals did contribute personal materials to the satisfaction of the design team (Greco Exhibition Meeting Notes).

Figure 5. Lezin Gallery, I remember…, Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, ©Anna Greco.

Figure 6. Lezin Gallery, Memory Jar Mural, Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History,
©Anna Greco

Methods of Analysis:

The exhibition opened with approximately 450 empty jars. Several of the jars

installed had been completed by students in an after school program prior to the

exhibition opening. They created an example for visitors in the exhibition. After the first

month of the exhibition, it became clear at some point the wall would be full and new jars

would be needed. The design team's initial measure of success was the number of jars

created. However, after the first few weeks it was clear the exhibition was eliciting more

personal responses from visitors than was initially anticipating. There was a wide variety

of memories submitted ranging in intimacy, emotion and experience. Participants were

sharing incredible, significant memories, sometimes about love and friendship and others

about war and poverty. Due to the success of the initial response, it was decided a more in-depth evaluation should be done on the activity. The author was brought back in to discuss the method by which this would take place. Many of the visitors wanted to know what would happen to their jars once the exhibition was over. This indicated a personal connection to the activity and the jars was being created. It was decided by the design team that there needed to be a method by which participants could return and take their jar at the end of the exhibition. A clipboard was placed on the tables in the gallery with written instructions and a sign up list. At the end of the exhibition, 216 emails (Granata Memory Jar Summative Evaluation) had been collected and 564 jars were recorded (Greco Label Spreadsheet).

Two weeks before the exhibition closed, a reminder was emailed to the participants to begin returning to the gallery to retrieve their jars. Attached to this email was a survey. The questions were designed to determine why the Memory Jar Activity was appealing and why the participants felt this environment was a safe haven to share personal information. The results will be discussed in the next chapter and a full transcript of the survey is available in Appendix A. Copies of this survey were left at the front desk. The visitor service staff was instructed to ask the Memory Jar participants who arrived to pick up their jar, whether they would like to take the survey.

The author also scheduled several dates to sit and observe the gallery. A shorter survey was created for face-to-face interviews. One year after the opening of the exhibition, the same email list was used to distribute a follow up interview. This survey was designed to determine the lasting effect of a participatory activity. In addition to the feedback that was collected from visitors the jars themselves were also analyzed. Legible

labels were transcribed for analysis totaling 564 memories. From all of this data, the jars were analyzed for emotion, intimacy and word count. Before the jars were returned, the amount of materials used to complete each jar was also recorded. The results gathered from the surveys and the transcribed jar labels will give a summary of the impact of this participatory exhibition and the potential this type of exhibit has for future projects.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

During the course of the exhibition it was determined there would be an

opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of the participatory gallery. This was achieved

by distributing a survey to the email list collected in the gallery. The survey was linked in

the email sent to participants notifying them to return to the museum to collect their

memory jars. The same list was used a year later to conduct a follow up survey. The

initial survey sought to determine what participants found appealing about the Memory

Jar Activity and why individuals chose the memories they did. The follow up survey

asked questions that would indicate the lasting effect of the activity and potential for

educational impact.

An introduction was written to the survey to create transparency. The design

team wanted it to make it clear to the visitor this information was going to be used by the

museum, but also as data for a graduate thesis. While writing this introduction, it was

important to keep the tone friendly and the text brief. Also, the author wanted it to be

clear to the visitors that their responses were important and would be used in this thesis.

Transparency in the analysis of this project was important, especially since it asked the

visitor to share a personal memory. Below is the introductory letter for the survey that

was distributed:

> Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. The Memory Jar
> Activity at the MAH has been a great success and we are trying to see
> what factors contributed to this. Your responses will help us immensely
> as we plan future activities and events. My name is Anna Greco and the
> work that I have done on the Memory Jars has been so amazing that I am
> writing my master's thesis at Harvard University on the work we have
> done here. I want to assure you that all of your responses will remain

anonymous and if you have any questions please contact me at
annag@santacruzmah.org. Thank you again for helping the museum and
me create better experiences for you. (Online Survey)

The survey started with general demographic questions regarding age and
gender. It then progressed to discuss materials and needs within the gallery. "Did you
have everything you needed to complete the activity, if not what would you have liked to
be included? Was the gallery an adequate space for the activity?" The survey was
designed to move from simple yes or no questions to open ended inquiry. The survey
asked the visitor why they had picked their memory, how they would rate the memory's
intimacy as well as if they had shared the memory before. All of these questions were
designed to help determine the comfort level of visitors within the space. It was
important to know they felt safe and that their basic needs were attended to. They were
also asked if they had participated in any of the other activities throughout the
museum. For a full transcript of the surveys, please refer to Appendix A.

A similar survey was created for distribution within the gallery. This survey had
the same goals but was shortened in order for it to fit onto one page. This method
allowed staff to interact with the survey taker and observe visitors participating in the
gallery. The shorter version focused heavily on the reasons why visitors contributed their
specific memory. The information presented in this thesis was inquired about in both the
online version and the in gallery survey. For a full version of the survey see Appendix A.

A follow up survey was distributed one year after the opening of the exhibition.
Participants were asked whether they remembered the memory they contributed and
whether they remembered any of the other memories they encountered in the
gallery. This final questionnaire also inquired if they returned to the gallery to retrieve

their jar and did they still possess it. An affirmative response to these questions would indicate a lasting impact from the activity.

In addition to the visitor surveys that were distributed, all of the legible jar labels were transcribed and coded for emotion and intimacy. The museum wanted to know what percentage of the memories being shared were happy or sad. The level of intimacy would indicate a visitor's comfort level which would help to determine the level at which future participatory activities could delve into the visitor's personal experiences.

Results

There were thirty-five responses to the initial visitor survey. Nine were collected in the gallery and 26 from an online survey. In order to keep the survey short and focused, only two demographic questions were asked: gender and age. Twenty-nine of the respondents were female and six were male. The largest age group that responded to the survey both online and in the gallery was from 19-25 totaling 34.3 percent of the results. It is interesting to note the 19-25-age range represented only 11.1 percent of the responses gathered in the gallery versus 42.3 percent of the online responses. This is an age range many museums have tried to access for feedback. This statistic may indicate the 19-25 age demographic is easier to access through online methods rather than in person. The second largest group of participants to respond in the gallery and online was the 46-55 age range representing 22.9 percent of the data.

After collecting data on the demographics of who had participated in the Memory Jar Activity, the survey explored the lasting impact of the Memory Jar Activity on the visitors. Of the 26 online respondents, all of them remembered the memory they

submitted in the gallery, 69.2 percent were willing to share their memory through the survey and 37.1 percent had never shared their memory before coming to the Memory Jar Gallery. When asked why they felt safe sharing their memory in the gallery, those with the most intimate memories stated that it was because others had already contributed. One survey participant stated, "If it weren't the right accepting energy, I wouldn't have done it." The anonymity and popularity of the activity only led to more in-depth and meaningful experiences for some of the participants. Creating a safe space was imperative when asking visitors to share a personal memory.

Most of the data received through the surveys was qualitative. While there was plenty of positive feedback on the activity, the design team was challenged as to how to evaluate the exhibition with quantitative data. It was decided the word count from the written labels and the volume the jars were filled would be good place to start. This would be a way to gage the visitor's engagement through the amount of content they contributed. The average word count for the memories was 16.81 words with a maximum of 105 words. Many of the contributions were written on both sides of the label indicating that the size of the piece of paper did not hinder the participant's contributions.

Another quantitative analysis was the volume participants filled in their jars. This statistic is not a direct reflection of the visitor's engagement rather it indicates the amount of materials that the museum needed to provide in the gallery for a successful exhibition. These materials needed to be restocked regularly to ensure visitors could part-take in the activity. Materials included craft materials, donated puzzle pieces, toys and various other materials that were purchased at yard sales or the local flea market. The only

requirement was that the materials fit into the jars. A few visitors did contribute personal

materials that they had brought with them to the museum. Table 1 illustrates the volume

that visitors filled their jars with the materials. The status of full + indicates that the

participant decorated the outside of the jar. By decorating the outside of the jar the

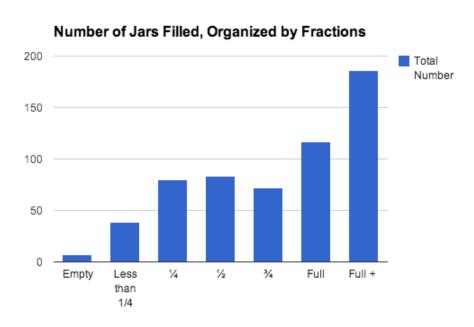visitor may be indicating an increased engagement in the activity however there was no

form of analysis to confirm this assumption.

Number of Jars Filled, Organized by Fractions

Table 1: Volume Filled of Memory Jars, ©Eugene Lee

The largest category is Full +, again showing that the physical size of the jar did not

inhibit visitor's contributions.

With the guidance of consultant Dr. Lauren Shapiro, a coding manual was created

for determining emotion and intimacy. For emotion, the following categories emerged:

happiness, love, gratitude/awe, sadness, pride, anger, fear, confusion and mixed. The

creation of a manual helped define each category and ensure consistency with the

coding. For example, memories that described or used the words "play", "laughter", and

"excitement" were coded as happiness. Whereas memories about receiving what one

wanted would be coded as "gratitude", achieving what one wanted which would be

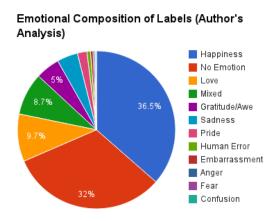considered "pride." The full manuals are available in Appendix B.

Table 2: Emotional Composition of Memory Jar Labels by Percentage, ©Eugene Lee

The labels were also analyzed by the author for the memories level of intimacy

(See Table 3). They were rated on a scale of one to five, with a five indicating a memory

with strong, life-changing emotion and a one indicating a memory that evokes no

emotion. The visitor surveys also asked the participants to rate the intimacy of the

memory that they contributed. The initial visitor surveys asked participants to rate the

level of emotion they felt when recalling the memory they had shared. Of the responses

received 42 percent chose five indicating a life-changing event and another 29 percent

chose a rating of four. Seventy-one percent of the participants indicated they had shared

a very powerful memory. Only four percent of the survey participants felt their memory

had no emotional connection. Eight percent did not respond to the question. This is a

46

drastic contrast to the analysis done by the author who found 32 percent of the labels

expressed no emotion and the psychological analysis of Dr. Lauren Shapiro, which found

29 percent of the labels to indicate no emotion.
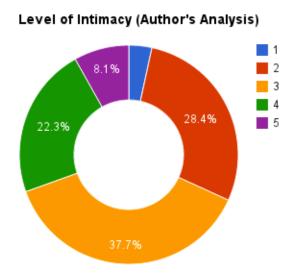

Level of Intimacy (Author's Analysis)

Table 3: Level of Intimacy of the Memory Jars by Percentage, ©Anna Greco

The large difference in what participants felt they were sharing versus what

interpreted solely from the written label on the jars indicates analysis of these activities

after the fact can be highly subjective. Participants may have regarded the activity as a

personal experience even though they were sharing a less detailed result with the whole

museum. This may be the result of an evolutionary survival response (Phelps

151). Phelps states, "In spite of the fact that most people report high levels of confidence

in their memories for these highly emotional events, the details of these memories are

often incorrect (147)." This study indicates that in highly emotional states, people's

memories are focused on what is right in front of them and do not recall peripheral

information. This is an evolutionary survival tactic to ensure a quick reaction when

confronted with danger:

> If a stimulus previously led to a strong emotional response, such as fear,
> encountering that stimulus in the future would indicate a situation that
> might require fast action. The fast action to avoid that stimulus may be
> more important than memory for the contextual details. (Phelps 151)

This is important to keep in mind since a major indicator of intimacy in the coding

process was the sharing of specific details. High levels of emotion naturally filter out

these details. The inaccuracy of the preconceived notion of more detail equals more

intense emotion is supported further by the fact the average word count of a memory that

received the highest level of perceived intimacy is 38.37 words. This is over double the

average word count of 16.81 for all of the memories recorded.

This activity also asked participants to attribute memories to physical

objects. There was no analysis done in regards to the objects that were placed into the

mason jars, but such analysis could be valuable to future research. There has been

research connecting human emotional response to physical artifacts and organizations

(Rafaeli 671). There is no reason why this same methodology could not be used when

designing exhibitions and activities for a museum.

The follow up survey was distributed to the same mailing list as the initial

survey. There were 16 responses after two rounds of emails. To determine lasting

impact from the activity, the survey asked participants to recall their memory and the

objects they chose to contribute. It also inquired as to whether they remembered any of

the other memories from the exhibit. Finally the survey asked if they had returned to

pick up their jar and whether they still had it a year later. The museum was also

interested in demographics. Thus, age, gender, and number of annual visits to the MAH were asked as well.

Of the visitors who responded to the survey, 81.3 percent remembered their own memory and 68.8 percent could list the objects they put in the jar, 31.3 percent returned to collect their jars from the museum and 80 percent of those still had their jars. It is important to note that it is not 100 percent of the visitors who returned to pick up their jars. On the surveys 27.3 percent of the participants who did not return to collect their jar expressed they wish they had. Also, many individuals could not find their jars when they came to retrieve them. They had to be moved to accommodate for the installation of the next exhibition and the sheer number of them made it difficult to pinpoint one.

Another indicator of the lasting impact could be interpreted from the open ended questions. In the follow up survey also asked why the visitors kept or discarded their jar. One participant responded, "I am an art therapist, I keep some of my own work. I have also used the idea of a memory jar for an art therapy class with cancer survivors." Another visitor responded, "Since we had the experience with my mother who was visiting from Indiana, it was a special moment for us all." Reasons for not returning to pick up a Memory Jar included, "It was a moment. Didn't need to keep it," and "I didn't make a very good one (Greco Memory Jar Summative Evaluation)." These responses do not give finite numbers to analyze the activity but they do provide insight into the reactions of visitors to these types of event and the wide range of significance they can have for an audience.

The question of why visitors contributed to the Memory Jar Activity can be analyzed from the anecdotal evidence provided in the surveys that were distributed.

Many of the visitors stated that the reason they contributed such a powerful memory was the anonymity of the activity (Gallery Survey, Online Survey). The anonymity partnered with the pre-exhibiting submissions made some of the visitors feel safe allowing them to share a more intimate experience. The gallery provided the materials to make a memory jar and it also provided the security that visitors needed to participate mentally and emotionally.

The collected data reflected many indicators that the visitors had a lasting and meaningful experience at the MAH due to the Memory Jar Activity. These evaluations were the first step in a greater understanding of how participatory exhibitions can be used to fulfill educational and strategic goals. However, collecting and analyzing the data from participatory exhibits, does require a significant number of man-hours and an understanding of the topics being discussed. For example, when analyzing the data gained from an activity pertaining to memories, it was imperative to understand basic coding techniques as well as studies conducted regarding memory and the brain's methods of processing and storing the information. With the right resources, a museum would be able to understand their audience on a much deeper level, but it would take proper planning and time.

Chapter 5

Risks and Benefits of Participation

The nature of participatory projects is fluid and will continuously change throughout the course of an exhibition or even a busy day. An ever-changing exhibition requires a set schedule for staff to maintain the space and provide sufficient materials. The staff must also be prepared to receive unexpected responses to the activity. Accurately identifying possible risks or weaknesses ahead of time will then allow staff to quickly and efficiently redirect the project if it strays too far from the initial goals. Many of these risks were identified for the Memory Jar Activity during the prototyping sessions and addressed prior to the exhibition opening. Nina Simon states, "(t)he best participatory experiences are not wide open. They are scaffold to help people feel comfortable engaging in the activity (Simon 13)." While this ensures a level of understanding for the participants it will also create guidelines for the museum to follow for continued maintenance of the space and establish an effective evaluation process for the success of the activity.

One of the greatest challenges for a design team is the willingness to relinquish complete control over an exhibition. By opening up the creative process to ones public there is the possibility visitors might contribute inaccurate information. Designers and curators must be open to displaying controversial and contradictory opinions. Clear guidelines should be set before the opening of the exhibition on what material will be removed, for example swear words or vulgar illustrations. For the Memory Jar project none of the submissions had to be removed. There must also be a willingness to accept unforeseen trends can be successful. Once the gallery is open the exhibition will change depending on visitor demographics, tours and special programs that occur during the life of the show. These will greatly influence the submissions gathered. It can also

contribute to a more accurate understanding of the type of visitor that was attracted to the exhibition or to the museum as a whole.

The Memory Jar gallery was open during the fall and was located on the same floor as the museum's annual Dia de los Muertos Offerenda. Dia de los Meurtos or Day of the Dead is a holiday in which families gather to remember and celebrate the lives of their deceased relatives. The offerenda is an altar on which photos and other objects are placed as an offering. This event was heavily attended and resulted in a number of submissions including letters to deceased family members. The gallery was not altered in any way for the event, however many visitors thought it had been installed specifically for the evening (Greco In Gallery Visitor Surveys). These submissions created a somber setting within the gallery. They also set a president for deeper and more serious submissions. This atmosphere helped create the unexpected result of this participatory project becoming a therapeutic activity. These submissions were the ones that indicated to true potential of the project and its ability to connect a community of museum visitors.

The greatest reward of a participatory activity is the direct connection it creates between the visitor and the museum. The traditional model of interaction between the visitor and the museum as described in Chapter 4 only allows for the flow of information to go in one direction, from the museum to the individual. Participatory activities allow for a continued flow of information to circulate between the institution and visitor as well as between fellow visitors. This creates opportunities for communities to meet and create something together. In this way the museum becomes more than a container for objects and information. It becomes a venue for community enrichment. By creating these connections the museum will learn what interests its constituents have in addition to

where they can help improve their neighborhoods. Participatory activities can be used to pose any number of questions to the visitor and enlist meaningful and relevant answers to the needs of the institution.

There are several common risks that reoccur in the analysis of participatory exhibitions.   Many of them can be avoided with thorough planning or a deeper understanding of educational theory. By taking a deeper look at the concerns surrounding these exhibits one can grasp a better concept of designing them.

Participatory Activities are not just for Children

One of the major opposing opinions to participatory exhibitions is that they are specifically designed for children. Judith Dobrzynski's critique of participatory projects in the New York Times made several references to the exhibitions becoming juvenile (August 10, 2013). This opinion is in direct conflict with the work of adult educational theorists and museum educators. The study of andragogy, founded by Professor Malcolm Knowles, created a modern structure for how adults learn. The basic principles of his theory are as follows:

1. The heart of adultness is independence and self-direction.
2. The mature individual is a veritable storehouse of codified experiences, which are the essence of his central identity. Thus learning strategies, which use his potential for input, rather than learning activities, which are didactic, will be most productive.
3. The adult's readiness for learning is inherent in his societal role as a worker, parents spouse, organizational member, and the like. The adult's present situation and aspiring roles in real life must dominate and supersede all other considerations in andragogy.
4. The adult's orientation to learning is here and now and problem centered. (Newton 362)

The direct draw on previous experience and knowledge invests the adult in the exhibition and creates scaffolding for self-directed learning. Much like Hein and Falk these principles take into account the whole person, their needs beyond the classroom, their identity when they arrive, and the fact their focus may not be centered on the educational experience. Knowles theories clearly state a traditional, didactic method is inefficient for adult learning and may discourage the learner entirely. A participatory design will include them in the education process, validate their previous experience and create a current need for them to learn the information. It allows customization in a way that when designed properly will fulfill the needs of the visitor and the museum.

The magazine *Museum Education* dedicated their entire spring, 2008 issue to adult education. Co-authors Edward W. Taylor and Amanda C. Neil contributed an article exploring the non-formal education perspective. For their case studies they observed and interviewed docents leading tours in non-formal settings. One of the key elements to a tour at a national state park was to provide a pleasurable and fun experience for the visitors. "You are more likely to remember it if I have turned it into a humorous thing instead of this dry little bit of information", said one state park docent (27). Another docent purposely includes activities designed for children into her adult tours. "There is both professional opinion and empirical research which suggest that the major advantages of learning activities in non-formal settings over those in formal settings may lie in the affective domain (Meredith 806)." Informal learning environments compete with the personal needs of an adult visitor. Therefore, approaching the experience with a multi-model, such as a participatory method, can create a more lasting effect for adult learners.

Loss of Control over Gallery Content

In *Participate: Designing with User Created Content,* the authors interviewed several leaders in online participatory projects. In interviews they often asked how the lead designers deal with the loss of control and unpredictable submissions. Aaron Koblin a leader of a Data Arts Team in Google's Creative lab says there are "sweet spots" based on intersections of procedural decisions. Each decision affects the narrative or creates a new one, he must be conscious of this at all times.

> At Google, engineers learned that the best process of designing systems and tools was through an iterative process of testing assumptions- this works well when possible. When it's not been prepared for chaos and unexpected results, but after all, that's half the fun of it (Armstrong 65).

Keetra Dean Dixon, an artist and professor at Maryland Institute College of Art, constantly confronts the challenges of relinquishing control over to participants in her work. In her designs she creates a "call" to participants and the resulting response is the final product. This method allows for a surprising amount of control before the unpredictability factor is introduced (Armstrong 128). She creates clear scaffolding for the contributors to work within.

None of these projects or artists denies the existence of the risk of unpredictable outcomes. It is a factor in the design process. Simple and clear instructions can severely limit the unpredictable factors.

Marketing and Program Development

Participatory projects pose a unique problem for marketing. There are no images of the project before it begins making it difficult for visitors to know the project exists and what is expected of them before they arrive. The project will also never be replicated exactly the same again. Due to the nature of the project it is ever changing and a single image cannot easily capture the exhibition. "They rarely provide more than fragmentary evidence and convey nothing of the affective dynamic that propels artists to make these projects and people to participate in them (Bishop 5)." Bishop may be talking specifically about artists work but the sentiment is the same for a museum created space. The strength of a participatory project comes from the community it creates, which can change over time.

The up side to having a constantly changing exhibition is it provides plenty of content once the show opens. If the exhibition is mainly visual then there will be new photographs and content every day. This will give a marketer plenty of images and anecdotes to share via social media. It means that visitors come and part take in the exhibition will also have unique experience to share through these mediums. With the growing popularity of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, visitors expect to be able to share what they see and experience in the museum through these mass communication sources. A participatory exhibition will ensure they will not be disappointed.

This can also effect evaluation; it may become clear over time the initial goals of the exhibition have shifted and the most interesting data was not initially planned for. For example with the Memory Jar Activity, initial plans for evaluation were education based. After the first few weeks of the show other elements were introduced

56

including comfort level, intimacy and emotion. The evaluation process was changed due to the unpredicted memories that were submitted.

A good evaluation process will give insight into the needs and interests of a museum's visitor base. The information gathered from a participatory project can be specifically designed to create better experiences for you visitor. For example, at the MAH visitor comments are publically displayed on a bulletin board behind the entrance. The comment cards also have prompts including, "At the MAH I saw…" and "I wish I had seen…." Sixty-one percent of the memories submitted by visitors referred to the beach. Seventy-four percent of these memories were coded as happy, love or gratitude. This indicates that many of the visitors have positive memories of the beach and it would be beneficial for MAH to create beach themed programs or host programs at the beach.

Intellectual Rights

The final outcome of a participatory project is the result of many individual contributions creating a much larger whole. How will the museum acknowledge creative rights and privacy issues of each individual participant? The success of the Memory Jar Activity was due mainly to the anonymity of the final product (Greco Visitor Surveys). Despite the attraction of anonymity, many visitors still inquired about the future of their contributions. They were invested in its life and impact on future visitors. This imbues the museum with the responsibility to be forthcoming about the final goals of project and what will happen to the submissions once the exhibition is over. There are intellectual property rights to take into account and the personal information about visitors. Many of the submissions for the Memory Jar Activity

revealed sensitive information about their creator. Even though they felt comfortable

sharing with the museum community does not mean they would want their memory

included in a more public venue such as an advertisement campaign. For this reason the

author only refers to specific memories but does not quote them. The author will quote

responses given in the visitor surveys. The introduction to the surveys clearly stated that

they were a part of a graduate thesis research project. There was no indication of their

use for research within the gallery. It is important that the intent of a project is made

clear to the participants and the institution does not stray from the information given to

the visitors.

Getting the Word Out

Participation may be widespread in social media and marketing, but that does not

mean visitors will acknowledge the similarity in a museum setting. Just like there are

contributors and observers to online networks, the same personalities visit the

museum. Visitors have been trained not to touch and be quite within a gallery. Breaking

these rules, even when provoked by the museum may be difficult for seasoned

visitors. Others may simply be looking for a quiet observational experience. Introducing

participatory activities can be difficult in a smaller institution where space is limited and

the audience is not accustomed to a hands-on experience. If the participatory activity is

within a gallery with other objects that cannot be touched there is the risk of

miscommunication for visitors on what is a part of the hands-on experience. All of these

concerns can be address through careful sign creation.

The Benefits for the Visitor

The ultimate indication that a participatory exhibition is a success is the overall benefit for the visitor. These exhibitions provide a personal experience with deeper meaning and impact. They create transparency between the museum and the visitor. The traditional museum is often viewed as an ivory tower, unapproachable and elite (Weil 249). Participatory exhibitions break down these barriers creating a museum that adjusts to the needs of their visitor.

The Memory Jar Activity provided a family memory, a place for reflection and much more (Summative Evaluation Survey). Each visitor's contribution shaped the gallery to create a collection of experiences and memories representative of a community. The analysis of the activity will helped the museum create exhibitions and programs with greater relevance to their visitors in the future.

All exhibitions come with a certain level of risk. Participatory exhibitions are not an exception. The rewards create a better understanding and deeper connection with museum visitors. The traditional model of a museum where information only flows from the institution to the visitor does not take into account the changing needs of the visitor or their diverse experiences. Creating an opportunity for them to respond and contribute allows for greater adaptability for the institution. By inviting ones audience to contribute meaningfully to an exhibition it invites them to become invested in the institution. By feeling an ownership with the museum they are more likely to become repeat visitors and share their experiences with others.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Including participatory elements into an exhibition can enhance visitor engagement, educational goals, and the museum's mission. There are risks to creating an exhibition around participatory elements. However, with careful planning they can be reduced significantly. Participatory projects require a dedicated team, careful planning, an appreciation for the unexpected and a plan for addressing unforeseen outcomes. The Memory Jar Activity is just one example of the potential these galleries can have. With over 600 entries the project reached beyond the capacity of the gallery and the expectations of the design team. At the core of the MAH's exhibition and program goals are community and civic engagement. The institution actively explores new venues to engage their community and civic responsibilities (Garcia 87). They use participatory exhibitions and programs as the major conduit to measure visitor response and enthusiasm.

The reason the Memory Jar Activity was such a success was the trust the visitors had in the museum. As institutions created to protect cultural artifacts there is an understanding they will not abuse the information the visitors willingly give. Museums must be cognoscente of this role and take careful measure not to abuse it. The intent of the exhibition must remain within the goals of the exhibition and not serve personal gains.

Current trends in business, advertising, and entertainment all point to a more participatory society. Indicating a growing audience will be receptive and excited about these exhibitions. Changing the long-standing traditions of "hands-off" in a museum

may be difficult and will take time, but again the expectations and response from the

visitors will be positive.

Appendix A:

Online Surveys and In Gallery Visitor Questionnaire

Online Survey

Below is the first survey distributed to participants of the Memory Jar activity at the MAH.

Memory Jar Evaluation

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. The Memory Jar activity at the MAH has been a great success and we are trying to see what were the main factors that contributed to this. Your responses will help us immensely as we plan future activities and events. My name is Anna Greco. I am a graduate student at Harvard University, and I led the creation of the Memory Jars project as a MAH intern. The Memory Jars have been so amazing that I am writing my master's thesis about them. I want to assure you that all of your responses will remain anonymous and if you have any questions please contact me at annag@santacruzmah.org. Thank you again for helping the museum and me create better experiences for you.

Did you know that there would be participatory activities, like the Memory Jars, at the MAH when you arrived?

> Yes
> No

Did you have everything that you needed to complete the activity? If not what would you have liked to be included?

Did you come with a group? Who?

> I visited the museum on my own that day
> Family
> Friends
> Coworkers
> Other:

Was the gallery an adequate space for the activity?

> Yes
> No

If you answered no could you please tell us how the gallery could have been improved? Is there another location that you would prefer to see participatory activities?

Do you remember what your memory was about?
If you don't remember we understand, you may have done this activity a while ago.

Why did you pick this memory for the activity?

How would you rate the emotion of the memory in your memory jar?

	1 2 3 4 5	
No Emotion		Extremely Strong Emotion (This memory changed my life)

Have you shared this memory before?

> Yes
> No

Why did you feel this was a safe space for this memory?

What is your gender?

What is your age?

> under 12 years
> 13-18 years
> 19-25 years
> 26-35 years
> 36-45 years
> 46-55 years
> 56-65 years
> 66 plus years

Feel free to share any additional comments or suggestions here.
Thank you again for you time and input. We are so excited to read your responses.

In Gallery Survey

<u>Memory Jar Evaluation:</u>
This survey is being used by the museum to evaluate our participatory activities. Thank you for your responses. They will be a big help in developing future experiences.

Gender _____

Age: ____12-17 ____18-25 ____26-35 ____36-45 ____46-55 ____56-65 ____ 65+

Did you know that there would be participatory activities, like the Memory Jars at the MAH when you arrived?

____ Yes
____ No

Did you come to the MAH by yourself or with a group? Did anyone else in your group make a jar?

Did you have everything that you needed to complete the activity? If not what would you have like to have been included?

Why did you pick this memory for the activity?

Have you shared this memory before?

_____Yes
_____No

Why did you feel this was a safe space for this memory?

Please share any additional comments or suggestions? (Feel free to write on the back)

Thank you and enjoy the MAH.

Summative Evaluation Survey

Memory Jars Revisited

A year ago you made a Memory Jar at the MAH. The Memory Jar activity is the basis for my graduate thesis at Harvard University on the value of visitor-created content in museum exhibitions. I am asking for your help one more time to understand the long term impact of your experience. Please take 5 minutes to fill out the survey below. Thank you for your time and feedback. If you have any questions about this survey or the project you can contact me at greco.am@gmail.com

Best Wishes,

Anna Greco

* Required
What is your gender? *This is a required question*What is your age?* *
                 under 18
                 19-25
                 26-35
                 36-45
                 46-55
                 56-65
                 over 66

What was the memory that you contributed to the exhibition? *If you do not recall your memory please type, "I do not remember"*

What were the objects that you put into your jar to represent your memory? *If you do not recall please type, "I do not remember".*

Do you remember any of the other memories that were submitted to the exhibition? If so please share them below *If you do not recall any please type, "I do not remember"*

Did you return to pick up your memory jar at the end of the exhibition? *
                 Yes
                 No
Do you still have your memory jar? *
                 Yes
                 No
Why did you decide to keep or discard your memory jar? *In the past year I have been to the MAH* *
                 once

65

2-4 times

5-10 times

over 10 times

Please feel free to contribute additional comments below I visit the MAH for the following events *   Please check all that apply

Exhibitions

First Fridays

Third Fridays

Family Festivals

Lectures or Expert Presentations

Other:

Coding Manuals for Intimacy and Emotions

Manual for Intimacy on a scale of 1-5:

1- Nothing was written on the label or no label exists
2- Statements, single words, labels that do not make sense, lists of statements
    a. Drawing instead of words
3- Has two indications of intimacy, place, time, names, specific details of the memory or memories.
    a. No details but implying strong emotion ex: our amazing trip to Santa Cruz
    b. Expressing love for a place or thing
4- Has three plus indications of intimacy
    a. Direct quotes
    b. Personal contact info (emails that aren't attached to advertisements)
    c. Multiple senses referenced (smell, touch sound, sight, taste)
    d. Stating love for a person or a pet
5- Memories of intense emotion or intimacy. Full details of the event
    a. Letters a deceased relative or friend
    b. Life changing experiences or lessons
    c. Medical records
    d. Describing love for a person
        i. Accounts of births or deaths
        ii. First encounters ex. First kiss

Manuel for Emotions:

1. Happiness
   a. Contentment/satisfaction, fulfillment
   b. Fun, having a good time
   c. Being with/having something cool
   d. Being pleased with something
   e. Laughter
   f. Things being awesome
   g. Playing
   h. Feeling good about oneself
   i. Being excited
   j. Fond recollection, warmth
   k. Good news
2. Love (trumps happiness)
   a. Heart symbol
   b. Reference to object of their affection (e.g. partner "love of my life")
   c. Falling in love, love at first sight
   d. Love for child
   e. Cuddling, kissing
   f. Weddings
   g. Dates
3. Gratitude/ Awe
   a. Being glad of something
   b. Appreciation of beauty, nature, a place
   c. Marveling at heightened senses
   d. Getting what one wanted
   e. Being thankful, feeling blessed
   f. Feeling inspired
   g. Thanking for someone's patience, help, wisdom
4. Sadness
   a. Missing or losing someone or something
   b. Loneliness
   c. Physical pain
   d. Expectations dashed (trying and failing)
   e. Feeling bad about self
   f. Not being able to do what one wants or needs to do
   g. Reference to crying
   h. Heartbreak, ending of relationship
5. Pride
   a. Overcoming obstacles
   b. Description of an accomplishment (painting my first picture)
   c. Pride in children or possessions
6. Anger
   a. Expressions of violence
   b. Rage

7. Fear
8. Confusion
   a. Not know where one is going
   b. Not being able to make a final decision
9. Mixed
   a. Several emotions listed
   b. Feeling two emotions at once (bittersweet)

Bibliography

"About Twiter" January 5, 2014. Web.
        <https://about.twitter.com/company>

Almenberg, Gustaf. *Notes on Participatory Art: Toward a Manifesto Differentiating it
        From Open Work, Interactive Art and Relational Art.* United Kingdom:
        AuthorHouse, 2010. Print.

Anderson, Gail. *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspective on
        the Paradigm Shift.* New York: Altmira Press, 2004. Print.

Armstrong, Helen, and Zvezdana Stojmirovic. *Participate: Designing with User-
        generated Content*. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2011. Print.

Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells*. London: VERSO, 2012. Print.

Bruner, Jerome. *The Culture of Education.* 1996. Print.

"City of Santa Cruz Arts Plan." Pg. 8, July 13, 2013. Web.
        <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=82
        74>

"City of Santa Cruz Home" July 13, 2013. Web.
        <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com>

Clark, Lee Anna, Auke Tellegen, David Watson. "Development and Validation of Brief
        Measures of Positive and Negative Affect: The PANAS Scales" Journal of
        Personality and Social Psychology 1988, Vol. 54, No. 6, pg 1063-1070. Print.

Crooke, Elizabeth. *Museums and Community Ideas: Issues and Challenges.* New York:
        Routledge, 2007. Print.

Dewey, John. The School and Society; Being Three Lectures. Chicago: University of
        Chicago, 1899.Print.

        Logic, the Theory of Inquiry. New York: H. Holt, 1938. Print.

        John. John Dewey on Education. New York Modern Library, 1964. Print.

Dobrrzynski, Judith. "High Culture Goes Hands On." New York Times, (August 11,
        2013) December 29, 2013. Web.
        <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/11/opinion/sunday/high-culture-goes-hands-
        on.html?_r=0&adxnnl=1&ref=judithhdobrzynski&adxnnlx=1393182298-
        XuSKQ6lYc1EHN3ns4OPkug> (12/29/2013)

Eco, Umberto, Chantal Bezieux Roux De, and Andre Boucourechliev. *The Open Work*. Trans. Anna Cancogni. Cambridge, Ma. Harvard University. 1989. Print.

"Eligibility Criteria." American Alliance of Museums. June 16, 2013. Web. <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/assessment-programs/accreditation/eligibility>

"Facebook Newsroom" January 5, 2014. Web.

<http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts (1/5/2014)>

Falk, John H. *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience.* Walnut Creek, Ca:Left Coast, 2009. Print.

Rethinking the Museum Visitor Experience. Internationalt Formidlingsseminar, Nyborg, Denmark. March, 2010. Keynote address.

Fisko, Sara, Culture Shock 1913, Indian Harbor Yacht Club, Greenwich, Ct. 19, September. 2013. Keynote Address.

Fohrman, Darcie. "Museum Exhibit Philosophy." October 14, 2013 <http://www.darciefohrman.com/about/philosophy>

Granata, Elise, "Memory Jar Summative Evaluation." Message to the Author. August 26, 2013. Email.

Greco, Anna. "Memory Jar Labels" Unpublished Manuscript. 2012. Print.

"Memory Jar Survey" Unpublished Manuscript. 2012. Print.

Hein, George E., and Mary Alexander. *Museums, places of Learning.* Washington: American Association of Museums Education Committee, 1998. Print.

An Introduction to Constructivist Learning Education Theory. Internationalt Formidlingsseminar, Nyborg, Denmark. March 15, 2010. Keynote address.

Progressive Museum Practice: John Dewey and Democracy. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast, 2012. Print.

Hoppin, Jason. "The Cost of Keeping Santa Cruz Weird" Santa Cruz Sentinel March 14, 2013. Web.

<http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/ci_22793576/keeping-santa-cruz-weird-should-we-be-worried>

Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge England: Cambridge UP, 1991. Print.

McLean, Kathleen. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions.* Berkley, California: Association of Science-Technology, 1993. Print.

How visitors changed our museum :Transforming the Gallery of California Art at the Oakland Museum of California. Oakland Museum of California, 2010.Print.

McNealy, Scott. "The Advantages of the Global Village" Financial Times June 8, 2005, Edition 35, 784, pg 19. Print.

Newton, Eunice Shaed. "Understanding the Adult as a Learner" Journal of Reading 1977, Vol. 20, No. 5, pg. 361-363. Print.

"Our Exhibition Philosophy." Santacruzmah.org. July 13, 2013. Web. <http://www.santacruzmah.org/our-exhibition-philosophy>

Phelps, Elizabeth A, Tali Sharot. "How (and Why) Emotion Enhances the Subjective Sense of Recollection" Current Directions in Psychological Science 2008, Vol. 17, No. 2, pg. 147152. Print.

Pitman, Bonnie, and Ellen Hirzy Cochran. *Ignite the Power of Art: Advancing Visitor Engagement in Museums.* Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2010.Print.

"The Power of Play". Boston Children's Museum. April 1,2014.web. <http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/power-of-play>

Rafaeli, Anat, Iris Vilnai-Yavetz. "Emotion as a connection of Physical Artifacts and Organizations." Organization Science 2004, Vol. 15, No. 6, pg. 671-686. Print.

Serrell, Beverly. *Exhibition Labels: An Interpretive Approach.* New York: AltaMira Press, 1996. Print.

Simon, Nina. *The Participatory Museum.* Santa Cruz, Ca: Museum 2.0, 2010. Print

"Participatory Exhibition Intern." Message to the Author. December 27, 2011. Email.

"Notes from last Week's Exhibition Meeting." Message to the Author. April 16 2012 through August 16, 2012. Email.

"Thank You and Congratulations." Message to the Author. August 11, 2012. Email.

Sobel, David. *Placed-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities.* Massachusetts: The Orion Society, 2004. Print.

Taylor, Edward W., Amanda C. Neill. "Museum Education: A Nonformal Education Perspective" The Journal of Museum Education 2008, Vol. 33, No. 1, pg. 23-32. Print.

Weil, Steven E. *Making Museums Matter.* Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 2002. Print.

Winkielman, Piotr, Kent c. Berridge. "Unconscious Emotion." Current Directions in Psychological Science 2004, Vol. 13, No. 3, pg. 120-123. Print.